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Seasoning the Seasons™

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Epiphany: Three Manifestations of Christ

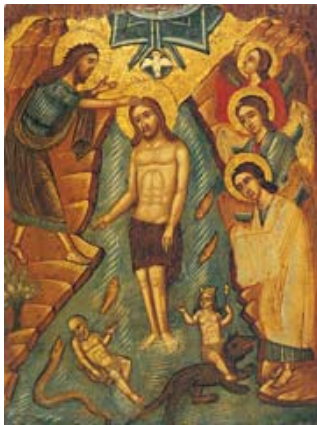
The Epiphany of the Lord: Three Manifestations of Christ

A Reflection for Epiphany

It is only in Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 2:1-12) that we hear of the visit of the magi to the infant Jesus. While we refer to *three kings* or *wise men*, Matthew does not tell us how many there were, nor does he say they were kings or sages. They were astrologers from the East who studied the stars. And they practiced awareness. When they saw the new star rise, signaling the birth of a ruler, they left their homeland for a long journey and followed the star where it led them. What about us? Do we practice awareness? Are we fully aware of the signs of Christ's birth in our lives today? And are we willing to be a pilgrim people, setting off on a journey out of our comfort zones to follow wherever Christ leads us?



The Gifts of the Three Magi
Byzantine Heritage, 432-440
St. Mary Major, Rome, Italy



Theophany
18th Century, Greek Heritage

The baptism of Jesus is a significant event. In all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), at the baptism of Jesus the spirit of God descends like a dove upon Jesus and a voice from heaven pronounces Jesus to be my beloved Son. Through baptism, we too are beloved sons and daughters of God. Through baptism, we too are anointed priest, prophet and king. Christos (Greek) and Messiah (Hebrew) are titles meaning the anointed one. In baptism, we became anointed ones. We became the Body of Christ. We became Christ. Are

we fully conscious and aware of our baptismal dignity? Do we see ourselves as beloved children of God who are loved unconditionally by our Creator? Do we recognize this same dignity in our fellow humans? Are we ready and willing to be Christ for one another and to show our light of Christ to the world?

In John's Gospel, as soon as John the Baptist gives testimony to Jesus, witnessing to the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove upon Jesus, Jesus calls his first disciples. And this is immediately followed by Jesus' first miracle - changing water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana. Jesus' glory was made manifest through this sign, and John 2:11 tells us that with this sign Jesus' disciples started to believe in him. What about us? When did we first start to believe in Jesus? Did it take a sign as miraculous as changing water into wine? Or was the beginning of our belief due to a sign much more commonplace – being born into a loving Christian family, being immersed into a community of faith? Are we aware of and open to the miracles that occur each and every day in our lives? Or are we so focused on seeking signs that are so extraordinary that we fail to see the glory of Christ revealed to us in the simple things of life – bread and wine, laughter and tears, sunrises and sunsets, starry nights and raindrops? *Lord, help us to be open to the epiphanies we experience each and every day...*



Christ Changing Water into Wine
14th Century, Serbian Heritage
Decani Monastery, Serbia